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"UTOPIAN" REFORM RECONSIDERED: THE CASE OF FOURIERISM  
AT BROOK FARM

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The Case of Fourierism at Brook Farm

ABSTRACT

In antebellum America, nearly one hundred reform communities were established in the hope that these would launch a peaceable revolution to displace competitive capitalism with a cooperative social alternative. This paper contests the common notion that communitarianism was no more than a "utopian" dream. It argues, first, that the realism of the movement must be measured by its adaptation to its historical setting and specifically, that the early nineteenth century was a period of transition to industrial capitalism in which other social options remained open. Second, it examines the case of the Brook Farm community at West Roxbury, Massachusetts, which adopted the social theory of Charles Fourier in 1844. Fourier's grasp of the basic principles of industrial organization and Fourierism's substantial working class following in New England are presented as evidence that this phase of the communitarian movement might have produced a functional social system. Its failure had less to do with the inexorable workings of historical forces than the decision of the reformers to abandon the crusade. Nevertheless, communitarian reform remains significant as a dramatic indication of the tangible social aspirations of the antebellum generation.

"UTOPIAN" REFORM RECONSIDERED:  
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Anne C. Rose

There has been a continuing interest in the reform communities which periodically appeared -- and often just as quickly disappeared -- in antebellum America. John Humphrey Noyes' History of American Socialisms, Arthur Bestor's Backwoods Utopias, and most recently Ronald Walters' American Reformers are only a few of the studies that remind us of the moral awareness, high aspirations, and sheer energy of the men and women who aimed at total social reconstruction during the early decades of the industrial revolution.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, we are apt to admire these community builders precisely because they seem so cut off from the self-seeking, competitive world of the nineteenth century city. And the short life span of their experiments (averaging under two years, according to Noyes) can be read as evidence of the impracticality of their dreams. Thus it is commonly assumed that these were "utopian" reforms and in consequence, scholars have approached them by means of intellectual history. We know, for example, that the communitarian movement owed much to the religious zeal and perfectionist conclusions of the Second Great Awakening. Yet the search for intellectual antecedents obscures the fact that these

reformers intended to revolutionize society. Religion may have supplied the standard against which to judge the emerging capitalist order and the motive to contest it, but the reformers were no less social critics, planners, and architects for that. One need only reconsider their communities from a social perspective to see that there was a fundamental realism to "utopian" reform.

If "realism" seems too nebulous a term to sit easily with the historian's conscience, its use at the very least points out that our understanding of "utopian" is no more precise. Both concepts must be examined before we can determine whether communitarian reform was an appropriate response to the historical situation the antebellum generation confronted. In the first part of this paper, I will propose some definitions and guidelines for thinking about the problem. Subsequently, I will consider one well known instance in detail, the Brook Farm community at West Roxbury, Massachusetts. Founded in 1841 by Transcendentalist George Ripley, Brook Farm changed in the course of its six year history from an informal experiment in practical Christianity to a "phalanx" modelled on the theory of Charles Fourier, the early nineteenth century French social philosopher. The fact that Brook Farm attracted a substantial working class following as a Fourier community and maintained close ties with the contemporary labor movement is important evidence that it was more than the Transcendentalist castle in the air portrayed in Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance. There is too much diversity among antebellum communities to

claim that the case of Brook Farm conclusively proves the realism of this type of reform. Nevertheless, Brook Farm unquestionably demonstrates that there was an affinity of aspirations between the communitarians and their contemporaries which had the potential to become a productive working relationship to achieve practical social goals.

# I

Any attempt to distinguish realistic and utopian reform must begin with the attack on the "critical-utopian" systems of Saint-Simon, Owen, and Fourier in The Communist Manifesto. The motive for the polemic, as Karl Mannheim shrewdly noted about political debate in general, was that "one generally proceeds more sharply against the closely related opponent than against a distant one, because the tendency is much greater to glide over into his view, and consequently especial watchfulness must be exercised against this inner temptation."<sup>3</sup> Marx and Engels admitted that the works of these social theorists were "full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class" since "they attack every principle of existing society"; but their plans for "pocket editions of the New Jerusalem" were still "utopian" and the author's use of the term remains instructive.<sup>4</sup> For Marx and Engels, communitarian reform, like the ideology of the ruling class, was built on false consciousness. The estimate of the facts of historical development made by Fourier and the like was simply

incorrect. In consequence, their solutions bore no organic relation to social forces already working to revolutionary ends: "Historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action; historically created conditions of emancipation to fantastic ones; and the gradual, spontaneous class organization of the proletariat to an organization of society specially contrived by these inventors."<sup>5</sup>

The assumption -- and presumption -- behind Marx and Engels' judgment is clear. Reality for them was class struggle. Anyone who proposed to revolutionize society by peaceable means, who tried to resolve the antagonisms of competitive capitalism through gradual displacement by communal alternatives, was, by definition, a utopian. Class division may indeed have seemed the only significant reality to a recent sojourner in Manchester, where rows of shops neatly hid in the slums of the working class from the mill owners' view as they commuted from their factories to their suburban homes.<sup>6</sup> Or, Marx and Engels may have defined class warfare as the historical bottom line in order to inspire collective working class action. But the fact remains that one need only change the setting, say, for example, to America, to make the accusers "utopians" on their own terms. There is no doubt that by 1846 Boston had its tenements, Lowell its factories, and even so new a city as Rochester its neighborhoods segregated by class.<sup>7</sup> But it is just as true that American workers in the 1840s refused to accept the inevitability of class conflict, established cooperative workshops as alternatives to wage labor, and joined the thirty-one Fourier communities founded

nationwide in large enough numbers to make them, within some communities, a majority.<sup>8</sup> Thus with respect to antebellum America, who was more utopian than whom -- Marx and Engels or their opponents -- is clearly open to question.

Still, Marx and Engels identified the most important test of the realism of any reform program, its conformity to the facts of historical development. The "facts" are not absolute as they would like, but relative to specific times and places. Yet even in a single situation, some conditions support a scheme's plausibility, while others militate against it, introducing an inevitable complexity into our judgment of communitarian reform. E.P. Thompson's assessment of British Owenism in the 1830s is especially revealing.

Thompson was able to take a serious look at the enthusiasm for the communistic towns proposed by Robert Owen, the one-time Scottish industrialist, because he respected the rationality of the English working class. Indeed, either Owenism was a mass delusion or one possible answer to the decline of artisan independence during the industrial revolution, and political counterrevolution, in early nineteenth century Britain. At the height of Owenite activity between 1829 and 1834, the working class proved its ability to organize on a cooperative economic basis. There were five hundred Cooperative Societies to plan or engage in communal production, Equitable Labor Exchanges in Birmingham and London where promissory notes for labor were traded for commodities, and a Co-operative Congress in Liverpool



where artisans from a number of English cities exchanged cutlery, stockings, shawls, shoes, and even diapers. All this was the starting point for Owen's social revolution, to be achieved by a network of communities guaranteeing workers the self-determination denied by competitive capitalism.<sup>9</sup>

According to Thompson, the strength of working class Owenism was its adaptation to the artisans' "long traditions of mutuality," which, since the 1790s, took shape in their benefit societies, trades clubs, dissenting chapels, and Corresponding Societies and Political Unions for Parliamentary reform. Nor was this simply an abstract correlation, but explains the source of the Owenites' common commitment and organizational skill in inherited patterns of interaction. So far Thompson defends the realism of Owenite reform; but the movement was utopian in its heedlessness of the political power, just then in the process of self-reformation to enfranchise the industrial middle class, which defended the economic status quo: "Co-operative Socialism was simply to displace capitalism, painlessly and without encounter, by example, by education, and by growing up within it from its own villages, workshops, and stores." 10

Despite echoes of the ultimate realism of class struggle, Thompson's judgement is sound. Official repression of working class agitation from the 1790s on, by legislation, trials, deportation, and executions (Thompson's "counterrevolution" often reads as a literal bloodbath), leaves no question that Parliament was a force to be

reckoned with. And the Chartists' demand for manhood suffrage and other democratic reforms after 1836 was undoubtedly based on their recognition of the political deficiency of the Owenite dream. It is important to note the stunning absence of such suppression of an unenfranchised majority in antebellum America. Although political freedom was not the principal reason for Owen's departure for the New World in 1824, it does help account for the ease with which he established his New Harmony community in Indiana and could, by Thompson's logic, support a case for the sufficiency of communitarian social reform, without a concurrent political revolution, in the American setting. Ironically, however, republicanism may also have curtailed Owenism's appeal. Whereas Owen was received as a hero by the American public, only seven Owenite communities were subsequently founded and it is difficult not to see the experience of Owen's own son, Robert Dale Owen, who moved from New Harmony to New York to promote the workingmen's parties which flourished with the rise of Jacksonian democracy, as an indication of the way political alternatives diverted communitarian energies.<sup>11</sup> Once again, historical conditions -- in this case political liberty -- worked for and against Owenite reform. If the "facts" are our standard of judgement and those facts point to different conclusions, how then are we to measure the realism of communitarian proposals?

Surprisingly enough, the answer is simple because the question creates a false dilemma. To insist that communitarians take full account of the realities of their historical situation is unwarranted

because such a demand requires greater political acumen of reformers whose projects failed than of those who measure up to the classic American criterion of value, success.

Compare the reputation of the Owenites and the Garrisonian abolitionists. In the 1830s the abolitionists issued an uncompromising demand that slaveholders renounce their sin immediately, by freeing their slaves. They have been criticized for their disregard of gradualist institutional channels of reform, but they have never been called utopians.<sup>12</sup> Slavery was abolished and thus the abolitionists' inattention to the economic, social, and political realities which made immediatism impossible is conveniently overlooked, as is the fact that emancipation was the result of a complex series of developments at several removes from its radical beginnings. With so loose a standard of "success," it could be argued that the Owenites were equally effective. Rational social planning, an idea pioneered by Robert Owen among others and at the heart of communitarian reform, is just as much an accepted feature of modern American life (witness the vitality of the social sciences and the proliferation of government agencies) as slavery is not. But Owen is considered a utopian because we do not live in communities which meet his specifications. Nor was slavery abolished by a massive ritual of renunciation. The point of this score-keeping is to suggest that perhaps no reformer ever perfectly assessed the "facts" of his historical position and accurately proportioned means to ends. Undoubtedly Owen was politically short-sighted, as Thompson says; but to admit that is to recognize that he was human, not a utopian. Above all, communitarians should not be

judged from the teleological standpoint implicit in the criterion of success.

The charge of utopianism is commonly grounded in deterministic premises. We excuse the Abolitionists' peculiarities because we assume that by some superior intuition they discerned the real direction of history, toward freedom or at least toward free market labor, while the communitarians just as surely mistook the underlying drift of events. And Marx and Engels dismissed their "utopians" with equal confidence because, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." But neither progress nor dialectics makes history, men and women do. Nor did historical forces defeat the communitarians; they chose to give up. Had they persisted, we might be living in small cooperative communities after all.

A number of scholars have been struck by the extraordinary range of options which opened up in the early nineteenth century, a circumstance which gives greater weight to the foregoing considerations. Arthur Bestor, for example, noted the "indeterminateness" of institutions on the advancing frontier to explain the plausibility and hence appeal of Owenism in America.<sup>13</sup> He admitted that the Turner thesis had to be stretched to fit the facts, namely, Owenism's European origin and predominately Eastern and Midwestern following in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. But historians who have viewed the same period through an alternative frame of reference, the industrial revolution, have been equally impressed by this plasticity of social structure. It was by no means patent, Eric Hobsbaum has argued, that the unprecedented industrial advances of the first half of the century

would end in a capitalist form of socio-political organization. One need only consider the radical potential of the popular mass movements which culminated in the European revolutions of 1848 to see the likelihood of a different outcome.<sup>14</sup> And, taking Hobsbaum's logic one step further, the alternative might have been some type of communitarianism, not only because of the broad support which Saint-Simon, Owen, Fourier, and Cabet at various times commanded, but because some groups, such as Etienne Cabet and the French Icarians, combined a communal ideal with political activism.<sup>15</sup>

It is a mistake to see the movement for small communities as an attempt to bring back the past, moreover, as the case of Fourierism will clearly show. Fourier took full account of such basic principles of industrial organization as economy of scale and specialization of labor, which he proposed to institute in planned economies of approximately 2,000 people. In Massachusetts, where shoemaking, the single largest antebellum industry in terms of the numbers employed, operated on a handicraft and to a significant extent a putting out basis until after 1850, Fourierism can hardly be said to have had a purely retrospective appeal.<sup>16</sup> More insidious than any formal presuppositions about early nineteenth century history is the temptation to see industrial capitalism as a fait accompli. At worst, communitarianism was an attempt to stop the clock; at best, it was an effort to create a cooperative alternative to competitive growth.

Thus the key to measuring the realism of communitarian reform is a thorough-going relativism: how well did these movements answer the problems and tap the possibilities of antebellum society? We must dismiss such preconceptions about "reality" as lead to categorical condemnation of "utopian" experiments; but we must also avoid uncritical defense. There is no denying that these communities were short-lived. Something was wrong. One possible explanation is that they were too well adapted to specific historical conditions to change in ways which ensured their continuing social relevance. Those which survived beyond antebellum period, such as Noyes' Oneida community, did so by successfully marketing specialty goods, while their mores (Oneida's "complex marriage") enjoyed a marginal existence as sociological curiosities. But in general, this rigidity of principle and, more important, the decreasing likelihood that a peaceable revolution could be won by community building on our complex modern society, limited the realism of communitarian reform in time. Ultimately, Brook Farm was as vulnerable as the rest. But between 1841 and 1847, the community demonstrated its capacity to learn from its experience and succeeded, however briefly, in offering a viable social alternative in industrializing America.

## II

The critical moment in the history of Brook Farm came in January 1844 when the community converted to Fourierism. A convention had been held in Boston on December 26 and 27 to rally

support for Fourier's principles and indeed, drew such active social reformers as William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Bronson Alcott, Orestes Brownson, and delegations from the Hopedale, Northampton, Skaneateles, and Brook Farm communities. Back home on January 2, the Brook Farmers appointed a committee to draft a new constitution for the community based on Fourier's theory of social organization; five days later they approved it by a majority vote. Thus to all appearances Brook Farm's commitment to Fourierism was a spur of the moment decision, the result of their enthusiasm for its promise to eradicate "Repugnant Industry, Tyranny of Capital, Chattel Slavery" as well as to liberate women by reordering society in planned communities.<sup>17</sup> Yet if the conversion was sudden, the preparation was long. Fourierism at Brook Farm was the climax of a fundamental shift in the reformers' ends, from individual growth to social cooperation, and means, from the voluntarism of evangelical religion to the structural reforms of social science. In the remainder of this paper, I will present a case for the increasing sophistication of the Brook Farmers' grasp of contemporary problems by examining the following points: the inability of their original methods to achieve their goals, the way Fourier provided some reasonable answers, and the connections between the community and the New England working class.

From its inception Brook Farm was designed to remedy the ills of industrial capitalism already apparent in New England by 1841. George Ripley had just resigned from the ministry of

the Unitarian Purchase Street Church in Boston and thus understood the social problem from the point of view of religion. The industrialization of Boston's hinterland from the 1820s on and the consequent growth of the city brought with them the decline of Christianity. In 1838, Joseph Tuckerman, the first Unitarian minister-at-large to the poor, estimated that as many as one third of Boston's residents attended no church. And the rate at which new churches were formed in the city fell from an impressive 70 percent in the 1820s to a mere 4 percent in the decade before the Civil War.<sup>18</sup> But to a man like Ripley, these facts were only the sign of a deeper conflict between the new society and Christian values. Class division, exploitation, and the constraining routine of market labor all stand behind the statement of his intentions for Brook Farm Ripley sent to Emerson, hoping to persuade him to join, in November 1840:

Our objects, as you know, are to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor that now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible, in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom, by providing all with labor, adapted to their tastes and talents, and securing them the fruits of their industry; to do away with the necessity of menial services, by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all; and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent,



and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life, than can be led amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions.<sup>19</sup>

Throughout the 1830s, Boston Unitarians had preached, published, and organized to promote practical Christianity. Brook Farm was the product of Ripley's frustration with this evangelical movement, growing out of the sustained attack which conservative Bostonians had levelled against the radical "Transcendentalist" religious opinions of Ripley, Emerson, and others.<sup>20</sup> Yet despite the discontent that led to its founding, Brook Farm inherited the evangelical's focus on the individual. The community's aim, as we have seen, was to construct an economy which favored personal spiritual growth as the foundation for ethical social relationships. But in practice, this commitment to the individual created not anarchism, as one might expect, but precisely the kind of social elitism Ripley hoped to erase. Here the utopian element in the original experiment which Fourierism would subsequently correct.

The failure of Ripley's plan to reunite social classes is a striking instance of the dilemma. Because he valued spiritual over material rewards, Ripley saw class division in terms of the unequal distribution of work and leisure, rather than wealth. Thus everyone at Brook Farm was to share the labor of the community so as to leave plenty of free time for all for education. The

The system worked, as far as it went. On one visit, Ripley's friend Elizabeth Peabody observed a former Harvard student take time away from teaching Greek to care for the fruit trees and saw the ladies spend the morning doing the laundry.<sup>21</sup>

The difficulty was that the community attracted few members of the working class.

Thirty-two people in all joined Brook Farm between 1841 and 1844 and twenty-seven can be identified with reasonable certainty.<sup>22</sup> Of those, 10 were ministers, teachers, writers, and their wives, 6 were former students, 2 had owned small businesses, and 9 earned their living by manual labor, 3 farmers, 2 artisans, and their wives. The community's emphasis on self-culture helps explain its appeal to professionals and students. But the poor showing of artisans and the absence of industrial workers owed as much to the simple fact that membership in Brook Farm depended on the ownership of property. The Articles of Association adopted in September 1841 organized Brook Farm as a joint stock company: shares were valued at \$500 each and entitled the owner to voting privileges.<sup>23</sup> Paradoxically, the purpose of the system was to ensure a material basis for the free development of the individual, precisely what Ripley promised rich and poor alike through equality of labor. Any denial of property rights, he wrote to a member of the reform community at Skaneateles, New York which practiced communal ownership, "would so far destroy the independence of the individual as to interfere with the great object of all social reform; namely, the development of humanity,

the substitution of a race of free, noble, holy men and women instead of the dwarfish and mutilated specimens who now cover the earth."<sup>24</sup> Whatever hope for social reconciliation Brook Farm held out in its provisions for labor was frustrated by a financial arrangement that guaranteed its selective composition.

Two other aspects of the Brook Farm economy intended as reforms of industrial capitalism similarly limited the community's effectiveness in practice. The first was voluntary labor.

"Everyone prescribes his own hours of labor, controlled only by his conscience," Peabody noted, within general standards for work voted by the associates: 300 days was considered the equivalent of one year's labor and 10 hours in the summer and 8 in the winter equal to a day's.<sup>25</sup> The idea was to free the individual from the externally imposed work discipline of wage labor. But the community's records supply sufficient evidence of absenteeism and tightened restrictions to suggest that this anarchic solution was ill adapted to the capacity for self-regulation of the average man or woman. Indeed, the Brook Farmers became increasingly selective in the admission of members until they instituted Fourierism. And the frequency with which they used sexual conduct as evidence of character (they rejected the mother of an illegitimate child and the daughter of a noted sex reformer) made the community, quite literally, a moral elite.<sup>26</sup>

What their ideas on property and free labor began, finally, in terms of isolating the Brook Farmers from their contemporaries, their choice of agriculture as the basic industry concluded. The

decision was consistent with their concern for spiritual culture, since farming was valued for its distance from the market, proximity to nature, and promise of a subsistence to protect moral independence. But Transcendentalist Orestes Brownson clearly saw that for wage earners now "unable to live a truly human life," going back to the farm was no solution. Reform communities must not dismiss the laws of industrial development, he argued in the Democratic Review in 1843; instead, each should specialize in the one industry for which it was best equipped and market that product on a mass scale. We must do for labor, he concluded, "what our manufacturers are doing with respect to capital through corporations, and our businessmen with credit through banks, that is, associate it, and by association increase its relative power."<sup>27</sup>

What is most significant about Brownson's proposal is his ability to distinguish the utopian features of existing communities (Brook Farm's retrospective attachment to small scale agriculture) from the realistic potential of cooperative economies as a form of corporate organization in industrial society. At one time a workingman's advocate and just recently the controversial champion of a working class revolution, Brownson was no dreamer and his judgment should bear some authority.<sup>28</sup> By 1843, in fact, the Brook Farmers' experience confirmed the wisdom of his views. Aware of the shortcomings of their original experiment, they had revised the Articles of Association to permit both the admission of members without property and the introduction of manufactures. One artisan who arrived in early

1843, a New York cordwainer and Fourierist named Lewis Ryckman, had taken steps to establish the shoe industry at Brook Farm.<sup>29</sup>

But the transition to Fourierism was not a simple process of casting off religion for practical economics. Realism was founded on idealism, indeed, on millennial hopes. As a community dedicated to spiritual growth, Brook Farm surpassed the reformers' original expectations. Three months before the Boston Fourier convention George Ripley wrote:

All here, that is, all our old central members, feel more and more the spirit of devotedness, the thirst to do or die, for the cause we have at heart. We do not distrust Providence. We cannot believe that what we have gained here of spiritual progress will be lost through want of material resources. . . . I long for action, which shall realize the prophecies, fulfil the Apocalypse, bring the new Jerusalem down from heaven to earth, and collect the faithful into a true and holy brotherhood.<sup>30</sup>

The Brook Farmers looked to Fourierism as a science to implement this religious vision. The "ultimate design of Christianity," one member of the community told the New England Fourier Society in 1845, "will be realized only when Science is brought to the service of Society, and a social order established, in whose form its divine principles can have their full action and effect."<sup>31</sup> Fourierism was a repudiation, however, of the evangelical's

reliance on good character as voluntary means of reform in favor of direct changes in social structure. So too the Brook Farmers' conversion entailed a critique of individualism on ethical grounds. "Do not come as an amateur, a self-perfectionizer, an aesthetic self-seeker," Ripley warned a prospective member that same September, "willing to suck the orange of Association dry and throw away the peel."<sup>32</sup> In contrast to evangelical Christianity, Fourierism was doctrine of communion and a science of cooperation. As such, it helped break down the barriers which separated the Brook Farmers from the society in which they lived.

As an intellectual system, Fourierism answered the principal problems which had limited Brook Farm's popular impact before 1844. It provided a method for redistributing wealth, a system for electing labor, and a plan for balancing farming and industry. The source of Americans' knowledge of Fourierism was The Social Destiny of Man, a compendium of Fourier's writings published in 1840, three years after Fourier's death, by a New Yorker named Albert Brisbane.<sup>33</sup> As a thinker, Fourier is easy to place. His faith in the capacity of reason to discover and implement laws of social perfection makes him a child of the Enlightenment. In terms of social analysis, he worked within a merchant capitalist framework, where, according to Fourier, merchants produced none of the wealth of society yet reaped most of the profits at the expense of the laboring classes, farmers and craftsmen. The diversified following of Fourierism in America, from the farmers who formed the Alphadelphia Phalanx in Michigan to the predominantly

artisan population of Brook Farm, suggests that this was a remarkably elastic theory that made sense in a period of fundamental economic transition.<sup>34</sup> Fourierism respected individual property yet promised great wealth from cooperative production, provided free selection of work within a specialized system of labor, and with topographical precision, placed fields next to workshops in communities the size of small cities. To accomplish all this, however, Fourierism was by necessity an immensely intricate doctrine, so much so that the historian cannot help but be impressed by the patience for ideas of the antebellum generation. A look at the reception of Fourierism at Brook Farm confirms this impression.

Fourier proposed an ingenious mechanism to cure the problem of class division which provided for the redistribution of wealth without violating property rights. In contrast to the Brook Farm Articles of Association, admission to the community would no longer depend on property ownership, since those "whose labor and skill shall be considered equivalent for capital" were qualified members according to the Fourierist constitution of 1844. This recognition of the value of labor did not lead to socialism, as one might suspect, but to a scheme of upward mobility to equalize property holdings. The community's profits would be divided in the following way: 5/12 to those who contributed their labor, 4/12 to capital, and 3/12 to theoretical or practical knowledge. When the Brook Farmers streamlined the system in 1845 (giving 2/3 to labor and 1/3 to capital), they also corrected the hidden flaw in Fourier's plan, that a resident capitalist

could be paid three times, for his wealth, work, and superior education. Now, as an individual's capital stock increased, his share of the allotment to labor decreased in the same proportion.<sup>35</sup>

The appeal of Fourierism to the Brook Farmers is clear.

Fourier promised to close class distances not just culturally, as they had tried, but economically, without damaging the independence of character they believed depended on private ownership.

More important, the absence of property restrictions and the chance of upward mobility drew significant working class support.

Of the sixty-seven people who joined Brook Farm in 1844, the occupations of fifty-six are known: 7 were professionals, 6 had been involved in commerce, and 43 were workers and their wives.<sup>36</sup> The majority of the working group were skilled artisans

from small New England cities who owned no property, or at least not enough to invest in Brook Farm. Excluding wives from the present count, there were 8 shoemakers, 5 carpenters, 3 printers,

3 seamstresses, 2 cabinetmakers, 2 mechanics, 1 tallow chandler, baker, pewterer, bricklayer, gardener, and carriagemaker, as

well as 4 farmers and 1 domestic servant. While over half of the 43 came from urban places of more than 2,500 people, only

9 lived in major cities, 8 in Boston and 1 in New York, and none in industrial centers such as Lowell, Lynn, and Fall River.<sup>37</sup>

Only 3, finally bought shares in Brook Farm now valued at \$100 each: a shoemaker, printer, and gardener.<sup>38</sup> One is tempted

to see these artisans as some of the "forgotten" men and women of the industrial revolution, more typical of the antebellum



working class than the industrial workers who until recently have commanded scholarly attention. With the notable exception of the shoemakers, they were faced with neither industrial competition nor the prospect of becoming operatives themselves, but with capital formation in their trades which blocked advancement to master status. Fourierism was a way to attain a fleeting ideal of economic independence, though now, significantly, by means of cooperation. Fourier's system of labor similarly blended traditional and modern patterns of economic organization.

We have seen that Brook Farm's anarchic alternative to wage labor required a rigorous self-regulation by conscience which few could attain and that few, in consequence, were accepted as members. In contrast, Brook Farm actively recruited in 1844, running an advertisement in the Fourierist journal The Phalanx for "men and women accustomed to labor, skilful, careful, in good health, and more than all imbued with the idea of Association, and ready to consecrate themselves without reserve to its realization."<sup>39</sup> The reason Brook Farm could safely open its doors was that Fourierism provided a labor system which combined freedom with organization. In theory, what Fourier proposed was a humanized form of the factory system. He planned to gather all the members of a community into productive units called groups and series. A group was "a mass leagued together from identity of taste for the exercise of some branch of Industry, Science, or Art" and groups engaged in related occupations formed one series until all the series in the phalanx added up

to about fifty altogether.<sup>40</sup> Free choice of labor was the principal advantage of the system. Having computed the number of different personality types and the number of jobs needed to satisfy the inclinations of all, Fourier reasoned that everyone could elect his work at will and everything vital to the community would get done. Thus groups and series satisfied the twin, though commonly conflicting, demands of happiness and efficiency, since the plan was based on the first principle of industrial labor, specialization.

In practice, the system worked less because of its modernity perhaps than because it duplicated the conditions of small workshops to which most artisans were accustomed. Group labor, moreover, supplied a mechanism of control which Brook Farm's initial voluntarism lacked, discipline by one's peers. An incident recorded by one young woman is revealing:

Yesterday Mr. List and Mr. Reynolds were unanimously expelled from the carpenter's group in consequence of their being discordant elements, -- so they went to the general direction requesting to be furnished with work, and that body sent them to work on the frame of the Phalanstery -- so they are working right in the midst of the [carpenters'] group, doing just what they are told to do, -- a sort of solitary labor and imprisonment.<sup>41</sup>

What these carpenters had forfeited was their right to a voice

in the decisions of a democratically organized body of workers. Rooted in a workshop tradition and anticipating specialized labor, there is no reason to doubt that Fourier's groups and series might have been the foundation for some form of syndicalist organization.

The likelihood of success increases, moreover, in light of Fourier's grasp of the utility of economy of scale in production. His belief that wealth would correct a multitude of social evils was somewhat disturbing to the ascetic temper of the Puritans' descendents (Elizabeth Peabody warned against the dangers of Fourierism's "captivating material aspect" for spiritual elevation);<sup>42</sup> but Christian ethics made the Brook Farmers receptive to "associated" industry as a means to this end. Fourier himself was virtually obsessed with the waste of isolated labor, especially that of women, and declaimed against the needless duplication of fuel, utensils, and time spent cooking, washing, and cleaning in hundreds of individual homes. His solution was to bring everyone into associations. In the case of housekeeping, all 1800 members would live in a single building called a "phalanstery," where apartments were grouped around a common dining room, kitchen, and laundry. He expected similar leaps in productivity when agriculture and industry were established on a community scale.<sup>43</sup>

How sophisticated the Brook Farmers' understanding of Fourier's economics was is difficult to say. They did make a deliberate effort to introduce manufactures, building a large

workshop, recruiting artisans, and marketing shoes, lampshades, and needle goods. But the program seems a curious blend of haphazard accommodation to the skills of the workers who came and mechanical effort to fulfill the letter of Fourier's industrial blueprint. Fourier did supply the theoretical basis for a cooperative industrial economy, if his followers were intelligent enough to use the system rather than be used by it. There is no question that the members of the New England Workingmen's Association took Fourierism with just such a measure of skepticism.

If we imagine communitarian reform as a retreat from social reality, the Fourierists' propensity, indeed passionate devotion, to organization, agitation, and alliance with other popular movements will come as a surprise. Regional and national conventions, efforts to coordinate the economies of the growing number of Fourier communities through a national organization, and measures to propagate Fourier's ideas in lectures, pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers (including Horace Greeley's national circulated New York Tribune) crowd Fourierism's brief life span in the mid-1840s.<sup>44</sup> The reason for this feverish activity was the hope that Fourierism could effect a peaceable revolution and the connection between Brook Farm and the labor movement in New England suggests that this expectation was not altogether utopian.

The standard interpretation of the election of Brook Farmer Lewis Ryckman as the first president of the New England Workingmen's Association in March 1845 is that of Norman Ware

in The Industrial Worker: "Unfortunately for the working-class movements of the forties, the intellectuals were always attempting to use them to advance their own plans."<sup>45</sup> Ware's hasty judgment (Ryckman was not an "intellectual," after all, but a shoemaker) is based on the assumption that the Fourierists diverted the workers' energies from strikes for bread-and-butter issues such as wages and hours to communitarian dreams. There are two errors in this logic, that Fourierism as a social theory was implausible and that the working class of the 1840s were modern "industrial workers." I have attempted to show that in its basic features Fourierism was a functional model for industrial society. Let us look at the antebellum working class.

Whereas all the workers who formed the New England Workingmen's Association in October 1844 seem to have been wage earners, only a minority were operatives in mechanized factories. The three principal groups to respond to the call of the Fall River Mechanics' Association for an organizing convention were from the cities of Lowell, Lynn, and Boston. Only Fall River and Lowell were textile centers (and whether all the Fall River "mechanics" were operatives is open to question), while Lynn shoemakers were employed in workshops which housed at most a few hundred handicraft workers and Boston artisans in various trades worked for merchant capitalists.<sup>46</sup> This diversity is significant because it reminds us that the transformation of an artisan into an industrial worker was a gradual process from which it might seem possible to escape. Alongside the numerous

strikes of the mid-1840s, a sign of workers' acceptance of their status as workers in a capitalist economy, there is evidence that they did hold out hope for an alternative in cooperative production.

At the first NEWA convention in Boston in October, before the Fourierists exercised any appreciable influence in the Association, the delegates passed this resolution:

That as by the present system of labor, the interests of capital and labor are opposed, the former now securing the reward which should only belong to the latter; that we recommend the formation of practical associations, in which workingmen can use their own capital, work their own stock, establish their own hours, and have their own price.<sup>47</sup>

Within months of the convention, the Lynn shoemakers established the Associated Labor Company, No. 1 and the Mutual Industrial Association of Cordwainers.<sup>48</sup> Boston workers, under the leadership of a tailor and NEWA member named John Kaulback, organized the Working Men's Protective Union in October 1845, which operated a cooperative distribution system until the mid-1850s to market the products both of artisans and reform communities. Tailors, printers, and seamstresses also engaged in cooperative production in Boston in the late 1840s, as did iron moulders in Cincinnati, glass workers in Pittsburgh, and shoemakers in Vermont.<sup>49</sup>

Like the "long traditions of mutuality" on which British

Owenism depended, these efforts must be seen against an American labor background of mutual benefit societies, workingmen's parties, trades unions, and most recently, the cooperative store movement initiated by farmers and mechanics in northern New England in the early 1840s.<sup>50</sup> Fourierism was not the source of associative ideas; rather, working class movements for cooperative production and consumption lend credibility to Fourierism as a realistic social solution. What Fourierism did contribute was a revolutionary framework for what might otherwise have been purely defensive measures. S. C. Hewitt, the agent of the Fall River Mechanics' Association who toured New England to promote local organizations, taught that Fourier communities should be the ultimate goal of labor activism, so as "to fill up the awful chasm which is already existing between the laborer and the capitalist -- to heal the breach which their present antagonism is continually making more alarming."<sup>51</sup> It is true, as Ware points out, that Fourierists and workers bickered at almost every convention over the priority of far-reaching versus limited ends and that the Fourierists' dogmatic attachment to full scale communities was one reason for their declining influence in the labor movement by 1846. Nevertheless, the fact that workers allied with Fourierists at all, that such debates took place, and that cooperatives flourished in the context of Fourierist ideas is strong evidence that New England workers at least contemplated a fundamental and peaceful social transformation, a hope which religion may have encouraged.

Christianity was a significant force in the lives of the

working class in the 1840s. That is not to say that they shared the millennial expectations of reformers such as Ripley, for there is little evidence they did,<sup>52</sup> but simply that their moral and ethical principles were one reason for the appeal of Fourierism's promise to heal social conflicts by nonviolent means. Working class radicalism in the 1830s had been irreligious, drawing instead on the secular rights of man tradition of the American Revolution, and sometimes actively hostile to religion. The imprisonment of Abner Kneeland, a free thinker and workingman's advocate, in Boston in 1838 for blaspheming the Christian religion demonstrates the extent to which class boundaries were also ideological ones.<sup>53</sup> But organized labor in the 1840s showed the same concern with moral behavior and social harmony which characterized evangelical Christianity. Mutual benefit associations begun in Lynn and Boston by the same workers who supported the New England Workingmen's Association required evidence of good character and temperance for admission. More important, workers deemphasized class conflict and, thinking in more pacific and indeed Christian terms, viewed labor organization as a means of mutual protection. "I have always endeavored to show that the true interests of all parties are most intimately connected," S. C. Hewitt, who may in fact have been a preacher, wrote in 1844, "that to separate them is to essentially injure the whole social body and produce chaos and confusion in social life."<sup>54</sup>

What had produced this transformation? Paul Faler has argued in a recent study of Lynn that the Society for Industry,



Frugality, and Temperance, begun in 1826 by manufacturers for the moral improvement of their employees, inadvertently contributed to the resistance workers later made to policies that threatened the dignity of their work, precisely what the Society encouraged them to value.<sup>35</sup> Faler's thesis on the relation of evangelical efforts to labor activism is sound, but should be amended in two respects. First, evangelical religion was not simply the handmaiden of work discipline. In a culture which remained preeminently Christian in its orientation, workers might well have turned to religion for an answer to the uncertainties of their position, especially when labor agitation collapsed after the Panic of 1837. Methodist and Universalist churches, the evangelical and rationalist poles of working class religion, both grew at twice the overall rate of Boston churches in the 1830s and while Universalism flagged in the 1840s, Methodism continued to increase at a healthy rate.<sup>56</sup> If this can be interpreted as evidence of a broader working class revival, then the effects may be seen at Brook Farm. The average age of the workers who arrived in 1844 was just under 30, making them precisely the group who would have been affected by this awakening at a decisive point in their lives. Thus Faler's connection between religion and resistance must be qualified in a second respect. The kind of opposition labor offered to the encroachment of capital must have been shaped by religious values. To be sure, there was angry rhetoric and numerous strikes in the 1840s. But there was also a longing for an harmonious resolution of industrial problems which Fourierism perfectly answered.

Yet Brook Farm was sold in 1847, Fourierism virtually disappeared by 1850, and labor activity of all kinds sharply declined in New England in the decade before the Civil War. What had gone wrong? The usual explanation for the failure of both reform communities and producers' cooperatives is that they were unable to compete in an expanding industrial economy, having no more security, Alan Dawley recently concluded, "than the multiplicity of small manufacturing concerns started on a capitalist basis."<sup>57</sup> The financial problems of Brook Farm and similar experiments were indeed acute. But more important than simple economics was the speed with which the reformers lost faith in their communitarian revolution. Hobsbaum has argued that the failure of the European revolutions of 1848 marked the triumph of capitalism, less as a sharp economic turning point perhaps (though the 1850s were a decade of unprecedented prosperity), than as the moment at which the free market system firmly established its social, political, and ideological hegemony.<sup>58</sup> Among American reformers as well, there was a feeling that capitalism was an unbeatable system and, one should add, not an altogether uncomfortable one. New England workers escaped becoming an industrial proletariat by moving up into an expanding number of white collar occupations, leaving factory work to the Irish.<sup>59</sup> And George Ripley became the literary critic of Greeley's Tribune, an arbiter of Victorian tastes who left an estate at the time of his death in 1880 of \$1.5 million.

Yet turning their back on communitarian reform was not simple hypocrisy. In the booming world of mid-century capitalism

their plans for an alternative society no longer made sense and their efforts took on the quality of a dream. "Did he ruminate over so varied a life, recall the dramatic controversies of the 1820s and 1830s, or remember the intensely romantic idealism of Brook Farm," Ripley's biographer Charles Crowe has asked: "One must suppose that he did not. . . . He became so completely George Ripley the scholarly but popular dean of American criticism, an institution, a pillar of letters and learning, that all the other George Ripleys ceased to exist."<sup>60</sup> Only in such a retrospective view, however, does communitarian reform seem utopian. Seen in its historical context, communitarianism was a realistic answer to social problems in the early years of the industrial revolution.

## FOOTNOTES

1. History of American Socialisms (1870; rpt. New York: Dover, 1966); Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian Origins and Owenite Phase of Communitarian Socialism in America, 1663-1829, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1970); American Reformers, 1815-1860 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 39-75. Other studies of particular interest because they examine the relations between reform communities and social, intellectual, and religious trends in antebellum America are John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," in Antebellum Reform, ed. David Brion Davis (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 153-76; Lewis Perry, Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1973), esp. pp. 129-57, 208-16; and Arthur E. Bestor, "American Phalanxes: A Study of Fourierist Socialism in the United States (with Special Reference to the Movement in Western New York)," Diss. Yale Univ. 1938. For a checklist of the communities, see Bestor, Utopias, pp. 277-84. Useful bibliographies are included in Walters, pp. 219-20; Bestor, Utopias, pp. 287-310; and Charles Crowe, George Ripley: Transcendentalist and Utopian Socialist (Athens, Geo.: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1967), pp. 296-300.

2. Most historians impose some classification scheme on the communities. Bestor, for example, distinguishes those established by religious sectarians of European origin from those modelled on the social theory of Robert Owen in Backwoods Utopias. All the communities, however, shared two features: a critique of existing society was the impulse behind their formation and the conversion of the world by example was their goal. It is important to note as well that such communities were not limited to the antebellum period in time, although, as Bestor notes, more were established between 1800 and 1860 (about one hundred in all) than at any other time in American history (Utopias, p. 231). On later experiments, see, e.g., Robert V. Hine, California's Utopian Communities (1953; rpt. New York: Norton, 1973) and The Family, Communes, and Utopian Societies, ed. Sallie TeSelle (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), a collection of scholarly articles generated by the communitarianism of the 1960s. I have limited my argument for the realism of communitarian reform to the antebellum period, however, first, because it does seem that special circumstances made the reformers' revolutionary expectations more plausible then, but more important, because each movement must be examined independently within its own historical context.
  
3. Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge (1936; rpt. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1949), p. 215.

4. The Communist Manifesto (New York: International Publishers, 1948), p. 41
  
5. Ibid., p. 40
  
6. Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England, trans. and ed., W. O. Henderson and W. H. Chaloner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), pp. 54-56. See also Steven Marcus, Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class (New York: Vintage, 1974).
  
7. Oscar Handlin, Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation (1941; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1977), pp. 88-123; Thomas Bender, Towards an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth Century America (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1975), pp. 97-126; Paul Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 48-55.
  
8. See below, pp. 21-22, 25-30. Scholars' estimates of the number of Fourier communities vary to some extent. My count is based on a survey of Fourierist periodicals as well as Bestor's list in Utopias, pp. 280-82. Three more Fourier communities were established in the 1850s.

9. The Making of the English Working Class (1963; rpt. New York: Vintage, 1966), pp. 779-806. See also J. F. C. Harrison, Quest for the New Moral World: Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America (New York: Scribner's, 1969), esp. pp. 195-216.
  
10. Ibid., p. 805.
  
11. On American Owenism, see Bestor, Utopias, pp. 94-229. Internal disputes and attacks on Owen's irreligious rationalism by the evangelical press also contributed to the rapid decline of Owenism in America. On Robert Dale Owen's labor activity, see Edward Pessen, Most Uncommon Jacksonians: The Radical Leaders of the Early Labor Movement (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1967), pp. 66-71.
  
12. See especially Stanley Elkins' critique in Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional Life, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), esp. pp. 140-206 and Aileen Kraditor's defense of their tactics of agitation in Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and his Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850 (New York: Random House, 1967), esp. pp. 11-38.
  
13. Utopias, p. 241.

14. Hobsbaum develops this thesis in The Age of Revolution: Europe, 1789-1848 (New York: Praeger, 1962), esp. pp. 297-308 and The Age of Capital, 1848-1875 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1975), esp. pp. 1-5.
  
15. See Christopher Johnson's excellent study of Icarianism as a political movement in France in the 1840s, Utopian Communism in France: Cabet and the Icarians, 1839-1851 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974). Interestingly, and in this case accurately, Johnson judges the establishment of an Icarian community in Texas in 1847 as a sign of their failure to gain political power at home.
  
16. Alan Dawley, Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 29.
  
17. "Call to the Friends of Social Reform," The Phalanx, I, 3, Dec. 5, 1843, 44. For accounts of the convention, see "Social Reform Convention at Boston," Phalanx, I, 4, Jan. 5, 1844, 46-47 and I, 6, Mar. 1, 1844, 84-87 and "Social Reform Convention at Boston," The Present, I, 7-8, Jan. 15, 1844, 277-88. The Brook Farmers' decision was recorded in the Brook Farm Minutes of Meetings, located in the Massachusetts Historical Society.
  
18. The church growth rates were based on a survey of seven denominations



between 1820 and 1860 in Anne C. Rose, "Transcendentalism as a Social Movement, 1830-1850," Diss. Yale University, 1979, pp. 18-20. Tuckerman made his estimate in The Principles and Results of the Ministry at Large, in Boston (Boston: James Munroe, 1838), p. 10. Although urban growth was not a simple product of industrialization, as Richard D. Brown points out in "The Emergence of Urban Society in Rural Massachusetts, 1760-1820," Journal of American History, LXI (1974), 29-51, Jeffrey Williamson has shown that the pace of urban development accelerated with the rise of manufactures between 1820 and 1840 in "Antebellum Urbanization in the American Northeast," Journal of Economic History, XXV (1965), 592-608. The most thorough study of this process in Boston is Peter R. Knights, The Plain People of Boston, 1830-1860: A Study of City Growth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

19. Quoted in Octavius Brooks Frothingham, George Ripley (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882), pp. 307-08.
20. Rose, "Transcendentalism," pp. 34-46, 115-140.
21. Peabody reported her findings in a letter to Transcendentalist Orestes Brownson, which he appended to his "Brook Farm," Democratic Review, XI (1842), 481-96. The idea that a redistribution of labor would resolve class conflicts was a common one, not only among Unitarians and Transcendentalists (see, e.g., Emerson's

- "Man the Reformer," in The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, I [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1903] 227-56), but among evangelicals of other denominations as well. See Robert H. Abzug, "Radical Millennialism and the Manual Labor Movement, 1825-31," Paper delivered at the American Historical Association Convention, New York, 1979.
22. Membership records exist for Brook Farm for the period September 1841 to April 1845. Members signed one or more of the following documents, all located in the Massachusetts Historical Society: Articles of Association (1841), revised edition of the Articles of Association (1842), Constitution (1844). Only the Constitution of 1844 contains birthdates, birthplaces, and occupations as well as names. To determine basic biographical information about members prior to 1844, therefore, I have relied on the substantial literature on Brook Farm, but primarily Lindsay Swift, Brook Farm: Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors (New York: Macmillan, 1900).
23. Articles of Association (1841), published in Frothingham, pp. 112-14.
24. Undated letter, in Frothingham, p. 147.
25. "Brook Farm," p. 494; Minutes of meetings, Oct. 30, 1841, in Frothingham, pp. 116-17.
26. On these decision, see Zoltan Haraszti, The Idyll of Brook Farm

- as Revealed by Unpublished Letters in the Boston Public Library (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library, 1937), p. 24 and Minutes of Meetings, Sept. 24, 1843, MHS (the sex reformer was Mary Gove).
27. "The Community System," Democratic Review, XII (1843), 144.
  28. See "The Laboring Classes," Boston Quarterly Review, III (1840), 358-95 and 420-512. On his involvement in the labor movement in the late 1820s, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Orestes A. Brownson: A Pilgrim's Progress (Boston: Little, Brown, 1939), pp. 14-21.
  29. Minutes of Meetings, February 11-25, 1843, MHS
  30. Letter to Isaac Hecker, Sept. 18, 1843, quoted in Walter Elliot, The Life of Father Hecker (New York: Columbia Press, 1894), p. 91.
  31. "Convention of the New England Fourier Society," Phalanx, I, 21, Feb. 8, 1845, 312.
  32. Letter to Hecker, in Elliott, p. 91.
  33. The Social Destiny of Man: or, Association and Reorganization of Industry (Philadelphia: C. F. Stollmeyer, 1840). On Brisbane, see his autobiographical Albert Brisbane: A Mental Biography, with a Character by his Wife Redelia Brisbane, ed. Redelia Brisbane

(1893; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, 1969) and Arthur Bestor, "Albert Brisbane -- Propagandist for Socialism in the 1840's," New York History, XXVIII (1947), 128-58. The best modern translation of Fourier's selected works is The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier, ed. Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971). For a commentary on Fourier's ideas, see Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, The Teachings of Charles Fourier (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

34. The social composition of Fourier communities varied considerably according to region, but generally the farmer population of Alphadelphia was the exception rather than the rule. There are strong indications that Fourierism was primarily an urban movement. Even in the West, communities grew out of conventions held in cities (on those held in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Ann Arbor, see the Phalanx, I, 2, Nov. 4, 1843, 19-21; I, 7, Apr. 1, 1844, 98; and I, 6, Mar. 1, 1844, 83). Communities located in rural areas were rarely indigenous. The Social Unity community in Pennsylvania, for example, was established by mechanics from New York City and Brooklyn (Phalanx, I, 1, Oct. 5, 1843, 15-16). Finally, Bestor found one third of the Fourierists in the Rochester area, where five communities were established, in city directories and more may have been urban residents whose names did not appear due to geographic mobility ("American Phalanxes," pp. 42-60).

35. Social Destiny, p. 354; Constitution (dated May 20, 1845), in the Phalanx, I, 23, May 28, 1845, 347-48.
36. See n. 22 on the source of this data.
37. The membership records of Brook Farm supply only birthplaces, not current places of residence and thus by necessity I have used birthplaces to draw these conclusions. There is collateral evidence, however, to suggest that if these individuals had moved, they were living in places roughly the same size as their native towns. The Minutes of Meetings list a current residence for 35 people who applied for membership, most of whom did not subsequently join. Nine applications were from Boston and two from Providence and the remainder from smaller cities and towns, almost the same proportions as among those who did join. I have established town size on the basis of the U.S. Census Office, Sixth Census or Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States, as corrected at the Department of State in 1840 (Washington: Blair and Rives, 1841).
38. Minutes of Meetings, Mar. 4 and Aug. 18, 1847, in Frothingham, pp. 194-95.
39. Phalanx, I, 6, Mar. 1, 1844, 81.
40. Social Destiny, p. 115.

41. Marianne Dwight to Frank Dwight, Sept. 19, 1844, in Letters from Brook Farm, 1844-1847, ed. Amy L. Reed (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.: Vassar College, 1928), pp.40-41.
  
42. "Fourierism," Dial, IV, 4 (Apr. 1844), 473.
  
43. Social Destiny, pp. 32-92.
  
44. See the Phalanx (New York, 1843-45) and the Harbinger (Brook Farm and New York, 1845-1848), the two major Fourierist journals, for an indication of the extent of these activities.
  
45. The Industrial Worker, 1840-1860 (1924; rpt. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. 178.
  
46. There has been no comprehensive attempt to reassess the social composition of the labor movement in the 1840s since such early studies as that of Ware; John R. Commons et al, History of Labor in the United States, I (New York: Macmillan, 1921), 487-574; Caroline Ware, The Early New England Cotton Manufacture (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), pp. 198-235; and Blanche Hazard, The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts before 1875 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921) pp. 65-96. Alan Dawley's recent study of Lynn is useful (see no. 16), but limited in scope. Consequently, I have based my conclusions on a critical reading of these older works, on the minutes of the labor

conventions published in the Phalanx, and on the more specific studies cited in the notes below.

47. "Workingmen's Convention," Phalanx, I, 20, Dec. 9, 1844, 302.
48. Dawley, p. 64.
49. Edwin Rozwenc, Cooperatives Come to America: The History of the Protective Union Store Movement, 1845-1867 (1941; rpt. Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1975), pp. 63-64.  
See also Commons, History, I, 565-71.
50. Rozwenc, pp. 13-16.
51. Quoted in Philip S. Foner, "Journal of an Early Labor Organizer," Labor History, 10 (1969), 221.
52. Only 6 of the 43 workers at Brook Farm participated in the Fourierist religious services held in the community, as indicated in the notes of a meeting to form the Religious Union of Associationists, January 4, 1846, Fisher Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.
53. See Henry Steele Commager, "The Blasphemy of Abner Kneeland," New England Quarterly, VIII (1935), 29-41 and Abner Kneeland, A Review of the Trial, Conviction, and Final Imprisonment in

the Common Jail of the County of Suffolk, of Abner Kneeland,  
for the Alledged Crime of Blasphemy (Boston: George Chapman, 1838).

For a sample of workers' secular rhetoric, see the Boston Trades Union's "Ten Hour Circular" (1835), in Documentary History of American Industrial Society, ed. John Commons et al., VI (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clarke, 1910), 94-99.

54. Foner, p. 221. On the Journeymen Cordwainers Society of Lynn and the Working Men's Protective Union of Boston, see respectively Paul Faler, "Cultural Aspects of the Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, Shoemakers and Industrial Morality, 1826-1860," Labor History, 15 (1974), 392 and Rozwenc, p. 33. Ware describes labor's belief in a possible community of interest between employers and employees in The Industrial Worker, pp. 198-226.
55. See n. 54 for the complete citation.
56. In the 1830s, Methodist and Universalist churches grew by 100 percent, while the overall church growth rate was 48 percent. Methodist churches continued to outpace overall growth in the 1840s (56 percent) at 67 percent, while the Universalist rate fell to 33 percent (Rose, "Transcendentalism," p. 378).
57. Dawley, p. 64.



58. See n. 14
59. Although scholars generally agree on the growing importance of immigrant labor in industry, less work has been done on the occupational mobility of native workers. The most important study is Stephan Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City (New York: Atheneum, 1964), pp. 80-114.
60. Crowe, Ripley, pp. 262-63.